



USC/Kenneth Norris Jr.
Comprehensive Cancer Center
and Hospital

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July 24, 1995

David Werdegarr, M.D., M.P.H.
Director
Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development
Health Policy and Planning Division
1800 9th Street, Room 400
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Dr. Werdegarr:

We have read and evaluated the draft report of the California Hospital Outcomes Project and the risk-adjusted outcome rates of our Hospital plus the accompanying data. In response, we offer the following comments:

USC/Kenneth Norris Jr. Cancer Hospital is a cancer speciality hospital. Our emphasis is in cancer treatment and prevention research. The patient mix is significantly different from other acute care hospitals. There were 2 cases of acute myocardial infarction from August 26, 1990 to May 31, 1992 and only 1 case of lumbar diskectomy from January 1, 1990 to December 31, 1991. Because of the extremely small sample sizes at our Hospital, it is very difficult to demonstrate a conclusive casual relationship between the observed outcomes and the quality of care provided by our hospital.

Since our hospital is specialized in cancer treatment, the patient population of acute myocardial infarction and diskectomy will remain very small in the future. Because of the continuous extreme small sample sizes, it is unlikely that the data will yield a meaningful indicator of the quality of our hospital care.

In conclusion, we acknowledge the sincere attempt to measure outcomes of medical care and appreciate the opportunity to present this response. USC/Kenneth Norris Jr. Cancer Hospital as part of one of the Nation's 26 NCI designated comprehensive cancer centers provides the utmost in high quality cancer patient care, this fact however, cannot be reflected through the diagnoses and procedures currently measured by the California Hospital Outcomes Project report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. Peter Shostak".

G. Peter Shostak
Hospital Administrator

CC: Christy Russell, M.D.
Chief of Medical Staff